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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 000319

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [TU](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKISH AMBASSADOR ON HAMAS, SYRIA, IRAQI KURDS,  
EREZ, AND A PIPELINE

REF: A) ANKARA 132 B) ANKARA 136

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones; Reasons 1.4 (B and D).

11. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with his new Turkish counterpart, former MFA spokesman Namik Tan, in Tel Aviv on January 26. Tan maintained that Turkey's policy of engagement with Hamas and Syria is intended to split them from Iran. He reiterated Ankara's opposition to the Iranian nuclear weapons program and expressed concern about Tehran's influence with the Iraqi Kurds. Saying that he was speaking under instructions, he also urged postponement of the Kirkuk referendum. Tan described Israeli-Turkish relations as "excellent" and outlined plans for a seabed pipeline between the two countries and efforts to revitalize the Erez industrial zone in Gaza. End summary.

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Tan: Engage Hamas and Syria to Split them from Iran  
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12. (C) Tan claimed that Turkey had had "no official contacts" with Hamas after Khalid Mash'al's visit in February 2006. He described Turkey's policy with Hamas as "engagement through appropriate channels," but with "no commitment." He made a similar case for talks with Syria, arguing that it is "critically important" to wean Damascus away from Tehran's influence. Tan added that the Turkish-Syrian relationship had "really changed for the positive" over the past decade. On Iran, he cautioned against overestimating Iranian strength, stressed Turkey's opposition to Iran's nuclear program, but added that Turkey had been unsuccessful in its attempts to get Tehran to "listen to the voice of reason." Noting that Turkey had stopped shipment of dual-purpose material to Iran, Tan pledged that Turkey "will do whatever we can to find a diplomatic solution."

13. (C) The Ambassador outlined U.S. policy on Hamas and Syria, stressing that any Palestinian government must accept the Quartet principles and listing numerous opportunities that Syria has missed to engage with the international community. He also asked about reports of the transshipment of armaments from Iran to Hizballah through Turkey and then Syria. Tan replied that Turkey has taken action on intelligence to interdict such shipments, but added that some of the information provided by Israel had proven to be inaccurate.

14. (C) Saying that he was speaking under instructions from Ankara, Tan reiterated concerns about the upcoming Kirkuk referendum. He reported frustration in Turkey over a perceived lack of effort by Coalition forces to battle the PKK in Iraq. In addition, he expressed concern that Iran could play its own "PKK card." Tan acknowledged that Turkey could do more to establish contacts with high-level Iraqi Kurds. Drawing upon his experience in the region and points in reftels, the Ambassador explained U.S. views on the

referendum and suggested that Turkey and Iraq could improve trade ties along the border. He noted that contacts with the Iraqi Kurds were also discussed as part of the ongoing strategic dialogue between Israel and the United States.

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Turkey-Israel Relations Strong; Erez Project on Track  
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¶5. (C) Tan praised Turkey's "excellent" relationship with Israel. He expected PM Olmert's February 15 visit will boost bilateral Turkish-Israeli relations and highlighted the important strategic aspects of a planned seabed pipeline between the two countries. Tan said he hoped that construction could begin soon after an inter-governmental agreement is signed. Describing the pipeline as beneficial to Middle East peace, he noted that Jordan will receive water and electricity as part of the overall project.

¶6. (C) Tan said that Turkish efforts to revitalize the Erez industrial zone would provide jobs for Gazans while taking full consideration of Israel's security concerns. He said the initiative "has momentum we shouldn't lose;" as soon as the Turks, Palestinians, and Israelis sign agreements, the project can start. Tan described the USG role in improving security at the crossings as outlined in the Agreement on Movement and Access as "crucial," and praised the efforts of USSC LTG Dayton. The Ambassador reviewed USG efforts to implement the AMA.

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JONES